

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SY-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SAM-01 PA-01 USIA-06

SS-15 NSC-05 PM-03 /060 W
----- 127250

P 101040Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5226

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8744

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: NBC REPORT OF ABDUCTION OF TWO AMERICAN CIVILIANS

REF: (A) BEIRUT 8678; (B) CAIRO 6779 AND (C) SECSTATE 161679
(NOTAL)

1. PURSUANT TO PARA 3, REFTEL A, I SPOKE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (JULY 9, TO FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA RE REPORT OF TREATMENT OF COLLINS AND THOMAS. TOLD HIM WE WERE CHECKING INTO IT AND IN MEANTIME HAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IT WOULD NOT BE CARRIED BY NBC. SAID THAT IF REPORT TURNS OUT TO BE TRUE I WAS EXTREMELY DISTRESSED THAT EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED BY LEBANESE AUTHORITIES. TAQLA SAID HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OF IT. I SAID THIS DIDN'T SURPRISE ME AND THAT IF STORY VERIFIED I PLAN PROTEST TO HIM. HE ASKED THAT I NOT REPEAT NOT DO SO, BUT RATHER TAKE MATTER UP DIRECTLY WITH APPROPRIATE LEBANESE SERVICES. I SAID I WAS RELUCTANT TO DO SO AND CONVERSATION STOPPED THERE.

2. CAIRO'S REPORT REF B, FOR WHICH WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL, IS NOT DISTURBING IN THAT PARA 3 INDICATES SOME LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AT LEAST WERE FULLY AWARE OF WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED BUT NEVER REPEAT NEVER CONTACTED EMBASSY.

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THIS IS NOT SURPRISING, FOR LEBANESE SERVICES ARE

ENDEAVORING DOWNPLAY KIDNAPPING AND LACK OF SECURITY
IN BEIRUT. TO ME, HOWEVER, IT IS INADMISSIBLE, AND I
REQUEST AUTHORITY TO DELIVER STRONG WRITTEN PROTEST TO
FOREIGN OFFICE AFTER REPEAT AFTER MORGAN'S RELEASEE.

3. IN CONNECTION WITH FOREOGING, WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF
CAIRO MIGHT ASCERTAIN FROM THOMAS AND COLLINS
THEY WERE DETAINED IN POLICE OFFICE NEAR PHOENICIA HOTEL AND
APPROXIMATELY HOW LONG IN THE "MAIN OFFICE" IN THE
MOUNTAINS?

4. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT I HAVE INDICATED I WOULD
LIKE TO MAKE THIS PROTEST AFTER REPEAT AFTER MORGAN
IS RELEASED. WHOLE MORGAN CASE IS STILL SO DELICATE
AND LEBANESE POSITION SO FRAGILE THAT I DO NOT WISH
TO ROCK THE BOAT UNTIL MORGAN IS SAFE. IT IS PRECISELY
FOR THIS REASON THAT I HOE NBC WILL HOLD UNTIL AFTER
MORGAN'S RELEASE THE THOMAS AND COLLINS STORY. MORGAN
IS ALREADY, AND POSSIBLY THOMAS AND COLLINS COULD BE
PART OF A MUCH BROADER PICTURE, I.E., AN INTERNECINE
FIGHT GOING ON WITHIN THE PLO (SEE EMBTEL 8715 NOTAL).
NO ONE CAN FORECAST WHAT THE PERIPATETIC PROTAGONISTS
MAY DO. CAUTION AND MORGAN'S LIFE THEREFORE ONCE AGAIN
LEAD ME TO REQUEST DEPARTMENT TO DO WHAT IT CAN TO PER-
SUADE NBC NOT REPEAT NOT TO CARRY COLLINS/THOMAS STORY
UNTIL AFTER MORGAN IS RELEASED OR HIS DEATH IS CONFIRMED.
GODLEY

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